

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1192

LIMDIS

ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, PGOV, VT, CZ
SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK-VATICAN TALKS

REF ROME 8078

1. SUMMARY: OUR DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS IN PRAGUE CONFIRM SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL, PARTICULARLY THAT RECENT TALKS DID NOT PRODUCE ANY FORWARD MOVEMENT. CHARTER 77 SOURCES VIEW OUTLOOK FOR FUNDAMENTAL IMPROVEMENT IN STATUS OF THE CHURCH IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS BLEAK. END SUMMARY.

2. VATICAN NEGOTIATOR ARCHBISHOP POGGI WAS PERMITTED TO CALL ONLY ON ITALIAN, SPANISH AND PERUVIAN AMBASSADORS WITH WHOM HE IS PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED, DURING HIS VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA APRIL 20-27. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH CZECHOSLOVAKS ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET FOR THEIR VISITORS, THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING QUESTIONS OF SUBSTANCE SUCH AS THE EASING OF RESTRICTIONS ON NUMBER OF SEMINARIANS. THE ONLY MATTER THEY SEEMED READY TO DEAL WITH WAS THE UPGRADING OF THE BISHOPS WHO NOW ADMINISTER THE ARCHDIOCESES OF OLOMOUC (IN MORAVIA) AND TRNAVA (IN SLOVAKIA) TO ARCHBISHOPAL CONFIDENTIAL

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RANK. AS BOTH BISHOPS (GABRIS OF TRNAVA AND VRANA OF OLOMOUC) ARE MEMBERS OF THE PRO-REGIME PACEM IN TERRIS ORGANIZATION, GOC ACQUIESCENCE IN THEIR ELEVATION WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE A MAJOR CONCESSION. MOREOVER, THE VATICAN WISHES TO NEGOTIATE DIOCESES QUESTION IN TOTALITY AND IS NOT WILLING TO SETTLE FOR THESE CRUMBS.

3. THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED TO ME THAT VATICAN

FOREIGN MINISTER CASAROLI IS INDEED HOPING TO BUTTIONOLE HIS CZECHOSLOVAK COUNTERPART BOHUSLAV CHNOUPEK AT THE UN SSOD LATER THIS MONTH.

4. GOC ADDED TO ANNOYANCE OF VATICAN DELEGATION BY REFUSING TO PERMIT TRAVEL TO VARIOUS DIOCESES AND ONLY ALLOWING DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES TO COME TO PRAGUE TO CONSULT DELEGATION.

5. TWO CHARTER 77 SIGNERS, ASKED ABOUT THE SINGNIFICANCE OF CZECHOSLOVAK-VATICAN RELATIONS FOR THEIR OWN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PROGRESS IN CHRUCH-STATE RELATIONS, WHILE NOT THE MAJOR CONCERN OF MOST CHARGER 77 SIGNERS, MANY OF WHOM ARE MARXISTS, COULD PROMOTE A HEALTHIER ATMOSPHERE ON THE CZECHOSLOVAK DOMESTIC SCENE. HOWEVER, THEY CAUTIONED THAT CHANCES FOR FUNDAMENTAL IMPROVEMENT IN EITHER CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS OR THE POSITION OF OTHER (NON-CATHOLIC) RELIGIOUS GROPS ARE SLIM. THE GOC SAID, IS SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO ON THE RELIGIOUS "FRONT" AND DOES NOT WANT TO OPEN ANY PANDORA'S BOXES.
FROWICK

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